

Quick Facts about Social Host

Montana: A haven for underage drinking

- In Montana, alcohol use rates are 10 percent higher for eighth graders, 9.4 percent higher for 10th graders, and 8.1 percent higher for 12th graders in comparison to students in the same grades nationwide.
- 10 percent of Montanans ages 18 to 25 are alcohol dependent. That's the highest rate for this age group in the country, and nearly twice the rate as some other states.
- Youth who have their first drink before the age of 15 are five times more likely to become dependent on alcohol than those who wait to begin drinking until age 21.
- Even short-term or moderate drinking impairs learning and memory far more among youth than adults. Adolescents need to drink only half as much as adults to suffer the same negative effects.
- Alcohol is the leading cause of death among teenagers.
- It is responsible for four times as many preventable teen deaths each year than all other illicit drugs combined.
- Alcohol contributes to nearly half of all teen automobile accidents.
- Alcohol contributes to nearly 65 percent of youth suicides.

COMMUNITY INPUT:

- An enforcement strategy that only charges those who "knowingly" provide a place for youth to drink.
- Consideration to landlords who cannot always police underage tenants.
- A data collection process so communities can look at evidence gathered locally and decide for themselves if their social host ordinance is working.
- In Helena, Great Falls and Billings range from \$250 to \$500. In Billings and Great Falls, offenders can also face as much as six months in jail.
- Law enforcement has no recourse for adults who choose to turn a blind eye and allow drinking to happen in their home or on their property.
- Social host policies reduce access to alcohol at private residences and the harm associated with underage drinking and drinking and driving.
- More than 150 communities nationwide enforce some kind of a social host ordinance.

END NOTES

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